

Social Media Strategy Development for Case Company X



Bachelor's thesis

Valkeakoski campus, International Business

Autumn 2019

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International Business
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Title	Social media strategy development for case company X	
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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä opinnäyte on tehty toimeksianto yritys X:lle, joka on vaatetusliike Hämeenlinnassa. Yrityksen painopiste on farkuissa, musiikissa ja ekologisissa arvoissa. Opinnäytteen tarkoituksena on tutkia digitaalisen markkinoinnin tekniikoita sekä trendejä ja kuinka niitä voi hyödyntää sosiaalisen median strategian kehittämisessä.

Opinnäyte tutkii sosiaalisen median markkinoinnin, sisältömarkkinoinnin, Instagramin yritystoiminta mahdollisuuksien ja asiakassitoutumisen aihepiirejä. Teoreettisen viitekehyksen rakenteen luomiseen tekijä käytti kirjoja ja hyödynsi tuoreempia artikkeleita ja videoita antamaan ajankohtaista tietoa.

Tämän opinnäytteen tutkimustyö toteutettiin Instagramin ”Storiesissa”, koska se on tehokas tapa saavuttaa useita ihmisiä. Tekijä toteutti kyselyn toimeksiantajayrityksen Instagram-käyttäjällä. Tutkimuksen ydin oli saada selville asiakkaiden mieltymyksiä sosiaalisen median sisällöstä. Tutkielma tuotti niin kvantitatiivista kuin kvalitatiivista dataa.

Yhdistämällä tutkimustulokset teoreettiseen tietopohjaan, tekijä pystyi antamaan päteviä suosituksia, jotka ovat relevantteja sekä vastaavat nykyajan online markkinoinnin ympäristöä. Nämä suositukset kertovat kuinka toimeksiantajayritys pystyy tarjoamaan sisältöä, joka on hyödyllistä asiakkaille ja houkuttelee heitä.

Avainsanat Digitaalinen markkinointi, sosiaalinen media, sisältö markkinointi

Sivut 29 sivua

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ABSTRACT

This thesis was conducted for case company X, which is a clothing store located in Hämeenlinna. Their focus is on denim, music and ecologic values. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore digital marketing techniques and trends and how to utilise them to develop a social media strategy.

The thesis researches the topics of social media marketing, content marketing, Instagram's business opportunities as well as customer engagement. Books were used to give the structure to the theoretical framework and up to date articles and videos were utilised to give current knowledge.

The research of this thesis was executed by utilising Instagram Stories, due to the fact that it is very effective tool to reach a lot of people. The author had a survey in the Stories of the case company's account. The core of the survey was to find the preferences of customers when it comes to social to social media content. The research provided both qualitative and quantitative data.

Combining the results of the research with the theoretical knowledge, the author was able to give recommendations that are relevant and equivalent to today's online marketing environment. These suggestions narrate how the case company can provide content which is truly useful and attracting for their customers.

Keywords Digital marketing, social media, content marketing

Pages 29 pages

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1 INTRODUCTION

The world of marketing has faced a huge change. Nowadays, TV ads and printed advertisement on newspapers are not enough. People and business have moved to the online world and everyday more and more people join it. That is why social media plays a huge role in today's business world. It is an effective way to do marketing, boost sales and reach customers. What is more important, it is a lot cheaper than getting an ad in a newspaper for a longer period. Every post on Instagram, tweet on Twitter or video on YouTube is an ad. Therefore, companies need to consider carefully their actions in different social media platforms. With personalised, effective and most importantly interesting social media behaviour, companies can reach a huge number of potential customers, boost company's sales and brand image. Effectively planned and executed social media content plan can generate more loyal customer and increases the loyalty of former ones.

Zarrella (2009, 7) gives an example of how social media marketing can boost the visibility of a company. A company named Blendtec produces quality blenders, but they were not a known company until the CEO started to post videos on social media where he blended different objectives from phones to toys. Those videos went viral and nowadays they have hundreds of millions of views on YouTube. With this visibility, reportedly sales have increased too.

Another example of a social media success story is Fashion Nova. It is a fast fashion company founded in 2006 and it has five physical stores and an online store. It has gained 14,9 million followers on Instagram. They have utilised Instagram successfully because it is fully visual platform. The company has done a lot of influencer marketing with famous people. They also post constantly so their products are almost everywhere where their customers go. Fashion Nova has taken advantage of hashtags to find their followers. They repost pictures where people wear their products. The company also likes and comments on those pictures. This way they take their customer engagement to next level. Their content and outfit pictures are always relevant and trendy. (Michielin 2017.)

In both examples the companies found a way to boost their visibility and sales using social media. Their styles and content utilise social media platforms effectively and suit to their company. These examples show how important and effective tool social platforms are to today's businesses.

1.1 Case company introduction

The case company is a clothing store located in Hämeenlinna, which is part of a bigger chain company. Even though the product selection is filled with many brands and different kinds of clothing pieces the main focus of the company is denim. Knowledge of denim and the culture of the company is what makes it so special. The whole concept is based on music, urban culture and denim with a bit of rebellious mind-set. The other important feature is that the company focuses on responsibility and shares ecological values.

The company is already in social media with Instagram and Facebook. They are active in both channels by posting pictures of new products and outfits to inspire its customers. During the first meeting of the year they discussed how the company wants to focus on social media even more and to make the content more interesting and personalised. What to share there? Brand info? Responsibility? More interesting pictures? Together with the regional manager of the company the author came up with the topic. To create more effective social media content. Since this store is part of bigger company there are rules regarding social media posts and behaviour but otherwise they have freedom to do what they like. This way it is possible to come up with a strategy that is beneficial for them from a business perspective but also in creating content that looks like them and is attractive for customers.

Currently, the company has over 700 followers on Instagram. They post pictures almost daily and produce content to Instagram stories weekly. Their Instagram pictures are mostly pictures of products either worn by a person or laid somewhere in the store. Every now and then there are commercial pictures from the bigger company. Usually these pictures are advertisement material of sales and different offers. By analysing their Instagram data, the author found out that the “average follower” is aged between 18-34 years. 70% of the followers are female and 30% male. Most of the followers are located in Hämeenlinna but there are also followers from cities nearby.

1.2 Research question and objectives

This research was executed to develop a social media plan for case company X. Social media is a huge topic and there are many different branches under it, so together with the regional manager of the company the author came up with the research question which is “What kind of social media content is the most efficient when it comes to reaching and attracting customers?”.

The main purpose of this thesis is to improve case company X's social media content to gain more visibility, add loyalty among customers and to personalise their social media posts. The goals of this thesis are to find out:

- What type of social media content is the most interesting for the customers?
- What type of content customers want to see in their social media channels?
- What kind of content engages the biggest number of customers?

1.3 Structure and methodology

This thesis starts with an introduction to the world of social media. Right after that the author introduces the case company and its current situation on social media. After that the author presents the research question and explains the goals of this research. The last part of the introduction is for opening the structure and the methodology of the study.

The second part is the theoretical framework. In this part, the author searched for different sources to build up the theoretical background for the study. These sources cover the topics of online marketing, social media marketing, content marketing and customer engagement. By studying and analysing the theories, the author will find out the most important facts for this research. With the knowledge from these information sources combined with the result of the practical research, the author can give valid recommendations to the case company.

The third part of the study is the practical research. It is a combination of two different data. Firstly, the author will analyse the data that Instagram collects for entrepreneur account on the platform. This data shows for example engagement levels of company's posts. Later the author will analyse same data of newer posts to see if there is any change. The second part is a survey. It will be executed by using Instagram Stories. It is an effectual channel to reach many customers and the survey can be done in a way that the followers can easily and quickly answer to it. The author chose this channel for the survey because many people watch Instagram Stories. When analysing the result, the author can clearly see what customers find interesting and what they would like to see on social media.

The final part of this thesis is recommendations. After analysing relevant theories and the results of the practical research the author will give recommendations to the case company. This part will answer the research questions and reach the main goals of the whole study.

By utilising the outcomes of this study, the case company should be able to develop their social media plan and to produce social media content that the customers are interested to see. The goal of the new plan is to engage better with the audience and to gain visibility in the world of social media.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this part, the author introduces theories used in this thesis. Theories will be introduced by themes. Topics that these sources cover are online marketing, social media marketing, content marketing and customer engagement. The literature used is books and articles.

2.1 Online marketing

In today's business world it is necessary to operate online. Many companies have online shops where the trade happens digitally. It is only natural that marketing has also moved to the online world. The internet provides many powerful and easy-to-use channels for customers and businesses to operate in and that is the main reason why companies need to put effort into their online activities. (Charlesworth, Gay, Esen 2007, 2.)

In a nutshell online marketing is different tools, strategies and activities companies utilise to market their goods and services in the internet. Due to the fact that web world is so large with various channels online marketing has a greater amount of methods to use than traditional marketing. (Techopedia n.d.)

2.1.1 Advantages of online marketing

The internet has brought a lot of opportunities for companies. When a company understands the online world and how to operate there efficiently they have a tool that can bring them a lot of opportunities and advantages.

Firstly, the online world breaks down the geographical borders. Entrepreneurs in Europe can now easily reach customers all around the world. This advantage can easily increase the revenue and their brand awareness. (Charlesworth et al. 2007, 9.)

The second major advantage is cost effectiveness. Advertisements in magazines can cost thousands of euros but online advertising is a lot cheaper, sometimes even free. This is an easy way to cut down costs. (Charlesworth et al. 2007 10.)

The online world provides new kind of ways to perform sales promotions. Different types of e-coupons and offers can be distributed and advertised quickly to a huge amount of people. Traditional marketing cannot reach this kind of volume, at least not so effortlessly. (Charlesworth et al. 2007, 9.)

The internet stores an enormous amount of informative data. This feature is advantageous to marketing departments because they can analyse and keep track of how their marketing content performs. With the data companies can easily see what kind of content interests their customers and quickly make changes to their strategies to ensure the best possible results. (Charlesworth et al. 2007, 10.)

2.1.2 Customer led approach

The online world has made customers more powerful. They can find information of companies very easily and they also have a lot of options to choose from. This is why companies need to focus on their customers when planning and executing their online marketing. (Charlesworth et al. 2007, 97.)

The first and the most important step is to figure out what type of content they want to provide. They need to decide if they want to provide useful information and inspire people or put out straight forward advertising, or mix these two. No matter what type of marketing companies are executing it needs to be interesting and useful for consumers. (Charlesworth et al. 2007, 174.)

When planning their online marketing strategy, companies need to make sure that they are reachable, interesting and trustworthy. In the online world customers can find almost anything so if a company is not easy to find or reach they will not get the attention they need. (Charlesworth et al. 2007, 174.)

The fact that consumers can reach out to companies and interact with them is one of the most important features in the online world. This way companies and customers can create better relationships and learn from each other. Customers can give feedback which needs to be noticed. With the comments companies can develop their actions and make their content even more appealing for their target groups. (Charlesworth et al. 2007, 389.)

2.2 Social media marketing

Social media is a modern marketing channel that has hundreds of millions of people using it. It is a perfect way for companies to directly reach their customers. Marketing in social media is simple. Company or person registers themselves to these platforms and starts posting content. Mostly, social media marketing is cheaper than traditional marketing. Companies can use money for example to have influencer marketing and to advertise their pictures on the sites. Basically, social media promoting is trying to influence customers to buy company's products or services using these social channels. Social media is nowadays a marketing trend because almost everyone uses some social media platform. (Sajid 2016.)

Social media has taken its place in the world of marketing. Easy use and almost free marketing channels are some reasons, but social media is efficient tool when it comes to telling customers the story of the company and giving information of their products. Utilising social media channels companies can identify themselves and their actions among potential customers, for example by posting informative videos on YouTube. Visibility is second important factor that social marketing provides. The content doesn't always have to be about their products. If the material is interesting enough it can go viral and that way reach even larger audience. This way a company gets visibility among people who even didn't know they exist. Another method is to pay and get their posts advertised. Sometimes companies can be seen as big an "surreal" institution that are hard to reach. In these situations, social media can help. Potential customers can follow them for example in Instagram or Facebook and receive important information through the content. Also, giving feedback and asking question through social channels is easier and not seen as so thrilling. Good customer service in these settings is likely to create positive image and this way create loyalty among the customer. Lastly, good social media content can lift a company above its competitors. Personalised and outgoing activity will attract people. (Sajid 2016.)

2.2.1 Creating social media marketing plan

When a company decides to enter social media, it is important to have a clear plan. With clear plan the content is homogenous which supports company's activities and helps it to reach their goals.

1. Choosing social networks is the first part. There is no rule that every one of them needs to be utilised. When picking your own ones, it is important to choose the ones that really are useful for the company. In this phase, it is important to consider the audience. What is the gender, age and demographical location of the target customer? (Kevan Lee 2019.)

% of U.S. adults who use each social media platform

	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Twitter
Total	68%	35%	25%	24%
Men	62%	30%	25%	23%
Women	74%	39%	25%	24%
Ages 18-29	81%	64%	29%	40%
30-49	78%	40%	33%	27%
50-64	65%	21%	24%	19%
65+	41%	10%	9%	8%
White	67%	32%	26%	24%
Black	70%	43%	28%	26%
Hispanic	73%	38%	13%	20%
High school or less	60%	29%	9%	18%
Some college	71%	36%	22%	25%
College graduate	77%	42%	50%	32%
Urban	75%	42%	30%	29%
Suburban	67%	34%	27%	23%
Rural	58%	25%	13%	17%

Source: Source: Survey conducted Jan. 3-10, 2018.

Figure 1. Social media platform demographics. (Kevan Lee 2019)

As seen in Figure 1 there is some differences how people use social media platforms for example depending on their age. The figure shows that people aged 18-29 use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter more than other age categories.

Other important factor to consider is time. This means that company needs to carefully think how much time they are ready to put on social media managing. In the beginning one hour per channel is good but when gaining more followers more effort is needed. (Kevan Lee 2019.)

2. Second part is to fill the profiles perfectly. When a social media page has all necessary information available and it clearly shows what they offer, customer gets the feeling that the company is professional. At the same time, it boosts the brand. Besides all this, completely filled profiles indicate that company is taking seriously their social media presence and are ready to engage with their customers. (Kevan Lee 2019.)

3. After completing profiles company needs to figure out their own style. For this part, company needs to have clear goals. Goals determine what should be posted on the platforms and how to reach them is the actual implementation. This is crucial because in today's social media world there a lot of players and copying. Customers want authenticity and genuine profiles and content. Good tool for this is to think that if your brand was a person what kind of personality it would have. This way the company can find out what they want their customers to feel when visiting their pages. (Kevan Lee 2019.)
4. Next step is to find out posting strategy. The strategy consists the answers to two question. First one is how much should be posted daily and how many times a week. There is preferred amount of post per social platform. At the beginning, companies can start with smaller amounts and slowly add the amount to find out their own styles. Second question what type of a content we should post and when. For example, videos have bigger engagement level than pictures and links. It also depends on the platform at what time the content should be posted. Preferred time is usually afternoon and evening. (Kevan Lee 2019.)



Figure 2. Global best times to post on Instagram. (Later 2019)

5. Lastly, it is important to test different styles and analyse the results. Nowadays, most social media platforms provide analytics for entrepreneur accounts. Using this data companies can figure out what posts get more likes, shares and comments. With this information content that doesn't provide good enough results can be dropped from posting strategy. (Kevan Lee 2019.)

2.3 Instagram marketing

In this part, the author introduces theory of marketing in Instagram. Author chose this social media platform to focus on because the case company uses Instagram a lot and that is why the topic is relevant.

Nowadays, Instagram is a global platform where companies and people can seamlessly interact with each other. Since, Instagram is visual platform it easy for companies to humanise their content and promote their brand and products in a way that is not too pushy. Companies can present themselves in a friendly and approachable style. This is a major advantage due to the fact that 70% of Instagram users have searched some company in the site. (Collins, A., n.d.)

2.3.1 Instagram for businesses

Instagram was established back in 2010. During that time, it was ordinary social media platform where people posted selfies and pictures of their everyday life. Nowadays it is one the most effective marketing channel. Recently, Instagram started to provide better business analytics, possibility for customer to purchase products from the posts and new ways to get more traffic to Instagram Stories and pages just to mention few. (Later 2019.)

Instagram has become a huge social platform with over one billion active users monthly. 80% of the users follow companies and over 500 million users watch Instagram Stories daily. It is effective channel to appeal on people through their interests by using visual material. People use the site to explore, which means that companies have possibility to find new customers daily. (Instagram 2019.)

2.3.2 Instagram Insights

Instagram provides analytics of the performance of content. The page is called Insights. From there companies can find a lot of useful information what they can utilise when planning social media strategy or to observe which kind of a content succeeds the best. (Hootsuite 2019.)

Insights is useful tool for continuous strategy improve because it is up-to-date, statistics are provided in a simple way and the data can be reached from all devices. Insights is located in the business profile so there are no additional pages where companies should log in when they need to see the data. (Hootsuite 2019.)

Insights has three sections: audience, activity and content. These sections contain different type of data from customer geographic to performance of different posts. (Hootsuite 2019.)

Audience section is all about the customers. From this section companies can see how their followers divide by age and gender. Audience also shows where the followers are located and when they are most active. This type of information can be helpful when a company is planning their content or figuring out their target groups. (Hootsuite 2019.)

Activity section produces data that shows how much different actions for example, likes has been done to an account in a certain time period. From this section companies can also spot which days had the most activities done. With this information businesses can see what content generates the most activity and what does not. This way they can drop out content which does not work properly. (Hootsuite 2019.)

Lastly, content section. This section shows performance of posts in more detail. Here companies can see how individual posts or stories have succeeded. Also, in content section the time frame and variables like comments or engagement can be adjusted more. This section stores answers and data received from Instagram Stories polls. (Hootsuite 2019.)

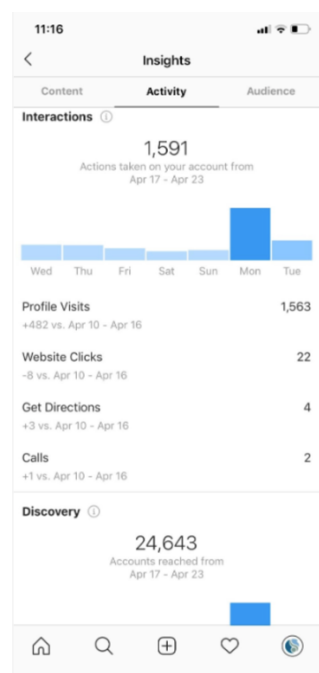


Figure 3. Example of Instagram Insights (Hootsuite 2019)

2.3.3 Instagram marketing strategy

The format of Instagram offers visual environment for business to grow and develop their e-commerce. Users of this site are proofed to be more engaged than users of Facebook and Twitter. Recent study that was mentioned in an article by webpage called Later shows that Instagram users do a lot of online shopping. Results of the study point out that 72% of the users have done purchases after seeing something on Instagram. Two features of the platform take an advance of this information. Links in Instagram Stories and shoppable posts. With these tools' customers can purchase items easier and faster. (Later 2019.)

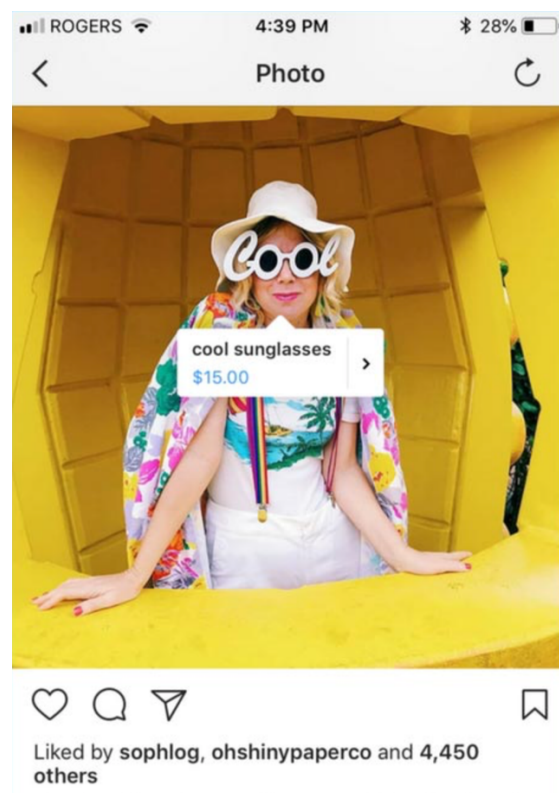


Figure 4. Example of shoppable post (Later 2019)

For companies to success in Instagram it is important for them to have clear strategy, understand how the site works and how to appeal customers.

Firstly, it is important to understand how the site works. Most important part is learning how to use the page. After that next challenge is Instagram's algorithm. In 2016, the platform changed from chronological feed to use algorithm. This way Instagram wanted the customers to see more posts that are relevant and interesting for them. Companies should know what factors effect on the performance of their posts. Users will see

posts that they like on their feed. For example, if a user likes a lot of cat pictures and company posts a picture of a cat Instagram will most likely show this post on top of the feed.

Another factor is timeline. The algorithm tries to show most recently posted content on the top. Third and one of the most effective factor is relationships. If a customer tags and comments on other users post a lot, Instagram will put that user on relationship category and show more content from that user. This is why companies should encourage their customers to tag them on posts, comment on their pictures and share their content to make sure that the algorithm puts their pictures on the top of the feed of their customers (Later 2019.)

After the company understands how the site works they can move to the next step which is determine what they want to achieve with their Instagram account. Goals need to be figured out. Depending do they want to build brand awareness or to get bigger and engaged audience they can plan out their way to act on the platform. After finding out what they want, they need to research their customers. If a company knows what their customer follows and what hashtags they tend to use, they can provide content that gets on their feed more often and with better impact. This way they can also show that they are interested in same things. (Later 2019.)

Now the company has a plan how to perform in Instagram. Next step is to audit their own page. Using statistics, they can learn what result their previous actions have generated. With this information, they can drop out unnecessary actions and focus more on the content that is popular among the followers. After this, companies need to focus on everything from their bio to captions. Everything should be well-thought and natural. This gives better image to the followers and keeps their page professional and focused on their goals. (Later 2019.)

One important factor of Instagram business is to optimise your profile. When customer visit an Instagram page they usually spend few seconds on deciding is it worth of exploring and following. Nowadays the look of your page is crucial. To make it more appealing companies can focus on the colour scheme, lightning and placement of the pictures. When all of these factors are coherent, the page looks aesthetically delightful and interesting. (Later 2019.)

Feature that is really useful for companies is Instagram Stories. They can be videos or pictures where users can get very creative. Stories can be looked for 24 hours. Many companies use this to boost their brand, usually by posting content that differs from their usual content. For example, Mercedes-Benz post videos and pictures from road trips to stories and pictures of their products on “traditional” way. Lately, the popularity of Stories has increased tremendously. This is because people are more

interested in videos and according to statistics, engage to them more. Therefore, this feature is huge possibility for companies. (Later 2019.)

2.4 Content marketing

“Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action. “(Content Marketing Institute 2019.)

Due to the fact, that marketing world is changing constantly new ways to attract customers is needed. One of the new trends is content marketing. It focuses more on providing content that is useful and truly helps customers with their problems. Content marketing is effective method to get loyal customers and loyal customers are proven to shop more often and bigger amounts, which means that sales will increase (Content Marketing Institute 2019.)

Content marketing is important to implement to company's marketing plan. For example, when doing social media marketing, content marketing strategy should be planned first to provide efficient things on the platforms. Another example is search engine optimization also known as SEO. Businesses that provide quality and consistent content are usually rewarded by search engines. (Content Marketing Institute 2019.)

Optinmonster (2019) introduces how different types of companies have succeeded in content marketing on different platforms. One example is about company called Intrepid Travel. They provide different types of trips and adventures for small groups. They post content on The Journal and Facebook. In The Journal, they post travellers experiences and tips of different locations. Other part of their strategy is to post inspiring and amazing travelling pictures to Facebook. Thanks to working content marketing they have gained almost half a million followers on Facebook and built communities for different social sites. (Optinmonster 2019.)

2.4.1 Efficiency of content marketing

What makes content marketing so efficient and appealing for customers? First reason is the changes in purchase process. Before internet and social media people didn't find information of products easily. Usually, sellers were only ones who could provide valuable information of goods. Nowadays you can find a lot of information and reviews of products fast. Therefore, a new trend has born. Customers search for information from internet to find out is a product or service suitable for them. 70-80% of customers look up information of a product before contacting a salesperson. With content marketing, businesses can provide useful

information of their company, products or industry and customers can choose this company when finding a solution to their problems. Another reason is called “Ad fatigue”. Ad fatigue is a state where people become blind for marketing. Nowadays people see so much ads when scrolling through online platforms. According to some studies people see thousands of ads daily. Efficient and well-designed content can pop up and interest customers. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi n.d.)

2.4.2 Content marketing explained

As mentioned earlier this marketing style provides informative content that is relevant and actually helps and attracts customers. One mission is to help. The goal of content marketing is to truly help customers and solve problems they have. Suomen Digimarkkinointi gives good example for this point. Ages ago Michelin handed small read books for people with cars. Instead of promoting tiers, these books showed restaurants, hotels and shared information regarding driving. Those books were valuable for drivers and it also boosted Michelins brand and created positive image. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi n.d.)

When company provides quality content it is good to test where it works. During these days, almost everyone is part of some social media platform. Companies need to find what channels their target customers prefer and start to post there. This content promoting is effective tool to gain more followers and potential customers. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi n.d.)

Important fact to remember when doing effective content marketing is SEO. It doesn't matter how good content company provides if no one cannot find it. Negligent SEO is most common reason why content marketing campaigns do not provide hoped results. It is proven that when people search products on Google they are closer to do their purchase decisions than when seeing ad on TV. That is why it is important to also put effort on SEO so company can help customers can possibly get sales. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi n.d.)

To ensure that content marketing is effective it needs to be trendy. Content should not be only telling about the company and promoting their products because customers want something different. In content marketing, it is important to focus on providing up to date information on many different formats like videos, pictures and podcasts which will answer to customer's needs. This way they will remember the company and most likely consider them when buying some product. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi n.d.)

Content marketing is long-term process which needs a clear strategy. To make it work and provide results, companies need to be patience and provide the content with a steady flow. If the works is done carefully it will increase results steadily for a long time. (Suomen Digimarkkinointi n.d.)

2.4.3 The Content Marketing Matrix

Creating new and fresh content continuously, can be hard and time consuming. Usually, the hardest part is to come up with new content and to figure out how to implement it. At the same time content designers need to think customers. At this point it is important to understand difference between decision making styles among consumers. Some customers have more rational approach when considering purchasing when other do their decisions spontaneously from emotional base. At this point, enters The Content Marketing Matrix or CMM. It is a tool that helps to find what type of content works better to different type of decision makers (Chaffey 2018.)

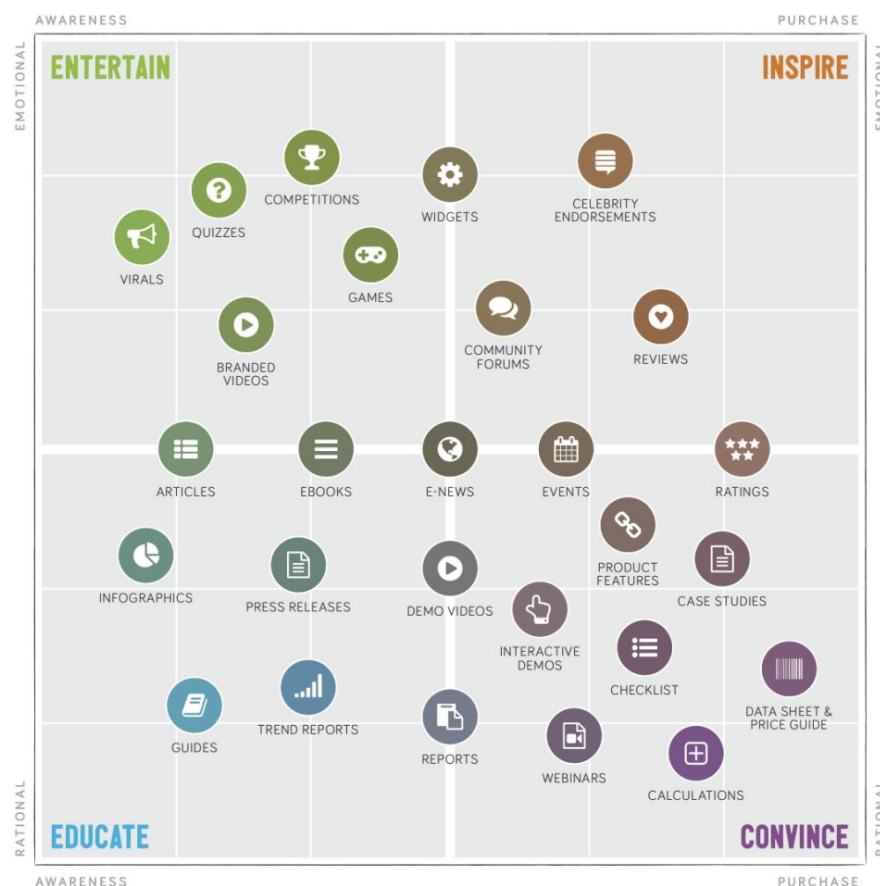


Figure 5. The Content Marketing Matrix (Dave Chaffey 2018)

1. First quadrant is called entertain. With this type of content, the goal is to provide something that is funnier and different from traditional marketing material. For example, games, funny videos and competitions. This type of content usually works for customers who

tend to do decisions from emotional base. It is also effective way to increase awareness of the company and to create positive brand image (Rowley 2014.)

2. Second quadrant is called inspire. Content which is part of this, seeks to include endorsements, testimonials and reviews. Probably the most effective inspiring content is collaborations with celebrities. These contents usually affect mostly on customer who are more emotional and tend to have more power on purchase decision than awareness (Rowley 2014.)
3. Third quadrant is called educate. This type of content can be for example guides and reports. The main objective of this type of content is to give out valid and useful information that hopefully is helpful and interesting to the customers. Content like this is more appealing for rational customers and usually increases awareness. (Rowley 2014)
4. Fourth quadrant is called convince. This content most of the time directly sells products and services that the company provides. Content for this purpose can be for example events and product features or then data sheets and case studies that are used more in B2B. This quadrant focuses on rational people and to make purchase happen (Rowley 2014.)

2.5 Customer engagement

For a product to move from factories to being sold it faces many important phases for example product development and marketing, but the main component is customers. With all the time changing trends and customer attitudes, it is crucial to get close with the customers. Keeping customers engaged with the company is important building block to success. To make sure that relationships with customers are as long lasting as possible and to ensure that there is plenty of customer interactions continuous customer engagement plays a huge role.

2.5.1 Definition of customer engagement

“Customer engagement is the emotional connection between a customer and a brand. Highly engaged customers buy more, promote more, and demonstrate more loyalty. Providing a high-quality customer experience is an important component in your customer engagement strategy.” (Clarabridge, 2019).

Customer engagement can be defined in many ways, but simple way could be the interactions between company and customers. It is important for few reasons. First reason usually is revenue generation. If customers find

your company interesting they want to engage with you and at this point well executed customer engagement strategy can provide sales and loyalty among customers. If a customer engagement continues after and outside purchasing moment, loyalty of the customer might rise. Loyal customers are proven to spend more money on the company they feel connected to (McEachern 2018.)

Other important value that loyal customers bring to the company is brand boosting and marketing. Satisfied customers tend to share their happiness towards the company with mouth to mouth “marketing” and social sharing. This can bring new customers but also positive brand image (McEachern 2018.)

2.5.2 Customer engagement strategies

Many customer engagement strategies focus only to get more revenue and continuous money flows. With good strategy company can receive genuine and long-lasting relationships. There are real touchpoints and strategies that are proven to improve customer engagement. (Swinscoe 2016.), (Mindtouch 2016.)

Customers want to have seamless and easy interactions when contacting the company. Company worker might not have ever talked with the customer and doesn't know his/her customer history. At this point, Omni channel approach is a good solution. This way customer's history is available for all workers and they can offer new solutions and help the customer as good as possible. With Omni channel strategy customer can get this customer experience no matter what touchpoint they interact at. (Mindtouch 2016.)

Research done by PwC states that only 44% of customers can say that they were confident that company employees understand their needs and issues. This is not good for customer engagement because customer won't feel good after situations like this. Companies need to make sure that employees get education and familiarization of the products. Also, product and support materials should be easily available in situations where employees are not sure of the situation. (Mindtouch 2016.)

One of the most simple and important strategy is to listen feedback. Customer feedback can provide both qualitative and quantitative information that is important to the company. With this information companies can improve some actions or add something that customers want. This shows that customers are listened and that their opinions are valuable. (Mindtouch 2016.)

One way to measure and improve customer engagement is to provide content and analyse it. By posting videos, articles or pictures that are valuable for customers can boost engagement. This way you become

important to a customer in other way than providing products that they like to buy. By analysing success and results of a content, you can find out what customer want to read and what form of content is most appealing. This way companies can adjust their actions to direction that better the relationship. (Mindtouch 2016.)

2.5.3 Customer engagement in social media

Engaging with customers in social media is very important. Customer determine the success of your social media pages. Also, good customer engagement in social platforms increases the positivity of a company's brand image. Happy and engaged customers are proven to show loyalty and loyal customers tend to shop more often with bigger amounts of cash. Happy customers are also one way of free marketing. When customer is satisfied with a company there is a possibility that he or she will share this positive experience to his or her friends. (Schulze 2016)

One way of practicing customer engagement in social media is fast responding. Fast answers can generate a conversation with the customer. If possible, responses should be written by a person to create an authentic feeling and to increase the transparency of the brand. (Schulze 2016)

Secondly, social media content of a company or an entrepreneur should add value to the customer. Helpful and useful information can increase the positive feeling of your operations. This kind of a content can be for example, guides or links to useful web pages. (Schulze 2016)

Third tip is to ask for it. Company can post a picture and, in the description, simply ask to comment your opinion, share this to your friend or tag your best friend. This is easy way to practice customer engagement and can be executed in majority of platforms. (Schulze 2016)

Next engagement tip is to utilise stories feature. It is a growing trend on many social media sites and platforms are developing their own version all the time. With stories, companies can create more intimate feeling to the customer by having polls, Q&A's and behind the scenes material. It is easy place to post content that a company does not want to post on their feed. Stories can also be used to post more relatable material if a company wants to post more official pictures and videos to their feed. (Local Measure 2019)

Also, one good tool to social media customer engaging is posting daily. This way company's content is always on the timeline and the brand is visible for customers. In the best possible situation, a customer starts to wait for your daily picture or video. (Big Commerce n.d.)

Lastly, one of the most essential tools is to make customers feel special. There are a lot of ways to do this and companies need to find what suits

them the best. For example, special offers, personalised answers and sharing pictures from a customer, just to mention a few. These kinds of activities can gain more followers to a page and give exclusive feeling to the already existing ones. (Rafiq 2017)

3 PRACTICAL RESEARCH

In this part, the author introduces the research that was performed to find out social media preferences of customers. The goal of the research is to figure out what type of social media content the customers like to see and find interesting.

3.1 Analysing of the content

First part of the research is that the author uses data provided by Instagram to find out what is the current situation of the case company's social media content, when it comes to popularity and customer engagement. After the survey results the author will together with the company post few pictures with "new style" and then will analyse the same data from those pictures to see if there are differences in the performance.

Basic content that the company posted received something between 33-50 likes per post. Second feature compared is how many times the account is visited from the picture. These pictures had something between 3-19 visits. Third analysed component is how many accounts has the post reached. With the "old posts" result was almost all the time around 600 accounts. Lastly, author checked out how many views the posts has received. The result was between 800-900 times. Author also noticed that in these posts there was not much comments or shares. These two features increase the engagement levels of social media posts.

After the results of the survey company will post new kind of content. Same data will be analysed so author can see is there increase in the numbers and does the posts really have more success.

3.2 Survey

The author conducted the data collection in a form of a survey. The survey was posted in Instagram Stories of the case company's profile. The survey was posted on Instagram Stories because it is effective way to reach most of the followers. It is easy to use, and Stories provide different questionnaire features like choosing between two options and open questions. After the survey is done Instagram provides data from the

answers. This survey provided mostly quantitative data but also qualitative.

First question asked about geographical information of a customer. Variables asked were age, gender and hometown. This way the author can find out if there are differences in answers for example between different age groups.

Second question utilized choosing between two options feature, provided by Instagram Stories. In this question, the goal was to find out do customers prefer outfit pictures placed on the ground or worn by a human.

Which of these two photos is
more interesting?



RIGHT

LEFT

Third question also used the two-option feature. With this question the author could find out is normal mirror selfie more attractive or picture taken someone else.

Which picture you find more appealing?



RIGHT

LEFT

Fourth question was also picking between two options. The goal of this question was to find does the milieu of the picture effect on the attractiveness of the picture.

Which of the pictures is more appealing?



RIGHT

LEFT

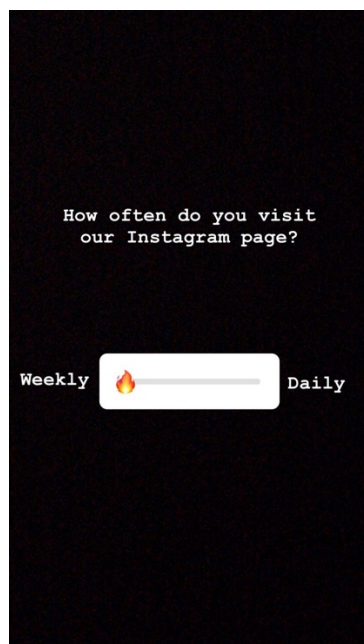
Fifth question utilised open answer feature which let participants write their answers by their own word. In this question, the author asked what type of social media content they like. The goal was to find what type of content customers generally like to see.

Sixth question had the same open answer feature as the fifth, but the question asked what type of social media content customers would like to see on the company's channels. This question brings out the feature's customers might already like and what they would like to see even more.

Seventh question had two options feature again. The question asked do customers prefer pictures or videos. This way the author can find out what type of content is more suitable for customers, when giving recommendations later in this thesis.

Eight question again utilised choosing between two options feature. The question asked do customer follow Instagram Stories or feed more. With the answers from this question the company can see should they post more to stories or feed.

Ninth question had "dragging feature". The question was how actively you check our social media pages. The participants could drag the line to the point they felt most suitable for them.



Tenth question was once again choosing between two options. The question was "Does our social media effect on your purchase decision?".

Eleventh question was open answer question where the author asked for open comments. With the answers company can find out good ideas what they can use to develop their content.

3.3 Results

Answers in the second question divided as followed. Picture where clothes were worn by a person got 93 votes (53% of the votes) and picture where the outfit was displayed on floor got 84 votes (47% of the votes).

In the third question picture which was taken by someone else received 100 votes (55% of the votes) and mirror picture received 82 votes (45%).

Results of the forth question divided so that the picture where the milieu was outside of the store got 98 votes (55%) and the picture taken inside the store received 81 votes (45%).

Fifth question had open answer feature so results were counted by the author. Most votes were for outfit pictures. It received 23 votes. Second largest number of votes were for new products with 22 votes. Third popular answers were sales and offers with 15 votes. With 14 votes, laidback and humorous content was the fourth most popular answer. Inspiring pictures with 9 votes was the fifth biggest answer. The rest of the answers the author put to others category. This category had for example answers like arts, reality, lifestyle and visually versatile.

Sixth question was executed in the same style as fifth. In this question, the most answers got outfit inspiration with 54 votes. Second most popular answer was new products with 14 votes. In the third place is DIY content (12 votes). With 7 votes brand information ranks at fourth place. Fifth most popular answer was sales and offers with four votes. Again, the author listed rest of the answers to others category. In this question answers like ecologic values, product of the month, videos and behind the scenes material ended up in this category.

Seventh question divided so that 104 voted for pictures with 75% of the answers and 34 voted for videos (25%).

In the eight question 98 voted for IG-stories (66% of the votes) and 50 voted for Instagram feed (34%).

103 answers were submitted for the ninth question. The average answer for this question was something between daily and weekly.

For the tenth question 119 voted that social media content of the case company effects on their purchase decision. This answer received 80% of the answers. Only 30 persons voted that social media does not affect on their purchases with 20% of the answers.

4 ANALYSING

In this part the author analyses the results of the survey. This way it is easy to spot what trends there are among the customers and their answers. Based on this information the author can provide relevant recommendations later on. Also, in this part the author analyses how the newer content has performed and has there happened any changes.

4.1 Analysis of research results

From the answers it is easy to see that customers are really interested to see outfit pictures where the clothes are worn by a human. Customers like to get inspired and it is easy to relate to pictures where clothes are actually worn by someone. The answers indicate that pictures that are taken by someone else is more interesting than pictures taken through mirror. Survey also shows that the milieu of the picture has an impact on the attractiveness of a picture.

Results of the survey show that generally people like to see outfit inspirations in social media. For example, Instagram is a platform where people post pictures of themselves and their life, so people can get inspired from the pictures. New products and sales were also at the top position. Social media is effective information channel and customers utilise it to find out what companies offer. This is good news for businesses because they can promote their offers.

Many participants mentioned that they like to see laidback material. This is growing trend. People also want to relate to the content and that is why content that is produced with “everyday” twist is getting more interesting among customers.

The case company is a clothing store, so it is natural that customers want to see outfit pictures in their social media. Results show that this is the most mentioned thing when asked what customers would like to see in case company’s social media. New products was very popular answer too. Once again it indicates that consumers search for information and inspiration from different social media platforms. Third most popular answer was do it yourself (DIY) content. This reflects to the fact that content marketing is growing trend and customers want to see relatable and useful material in media. It is a great opportunity for companies to provide content that really is beneficial for their customer base and this way build their relationships and attractiveness. Same facts apply to the results. After DIY the second most popular answer was brand information. Also, ecologic values and behind the scenes material were mentioned. This links to the relatability of social media content.

Survey results also say that pictures are more interesting than videos among the participants. Pictures are easy to browse, and the information can be easily seen and adapted. Videos can provide more detailed information, but they need to be either short and get straight to the point or otherwise very appealing.

Instagram Stories received more votes than the traditional feed. This must be because Stories is a newer and very trendy feature on social media and thus it is very interesting for customers. Stories are also easy to browse when a customer does not want to start to scroll through their whole Instagram feed. Instagram Stories can be edited in various ways and that adds interestingness of it.

Answers received from this survey show off that social media does have effect on the buying decision of a customer. This confirms the fact that social media marketing is as effective or even more effective than traditional marketing. Customers seek for information and new ideas through social platforms and if a company can provide these for their target customers, they have strong base for their social media activity.

In a nutshell the customers of the case company want to see relatable content of the products that inspire them, so they can find new goods to buy. The survey show that customers like to see that the company's brand image show in their social media content. Some participants of this survey also would like to see informative posts.

4.2 Analysing new content

In this part the author will analyse the data of newer posts. In these "new posts" the focus is put to make the content a bit more interesting by posting more pictures where clothes are worn by people. Also, the milieu and atmosphere of the photos is thought out more carefully.

The author uses statistics provided by Instagram to see did these newer posts perform better than "older posts". Same information is analysed than in the analysing of older posts. This includes likes, profile visits, amount of the accounts reached, views and likes, comments etc.

First feature is likes. Newer content received between 61-119 likes. Second feature analysed was how many visits a post has generated to the account. The results was 7-47 visits. Next analysed component was how many accounts has a picture or video reached. These posts had received something between 791-1860 accounts. Fourth feature is views. It shows how many times a post has been viewed. "Newer" content received between 1172-2520 views. Also, the author noticed that these posts also had comments and shares more often than the "older" ones.

4.3 The differences in performance

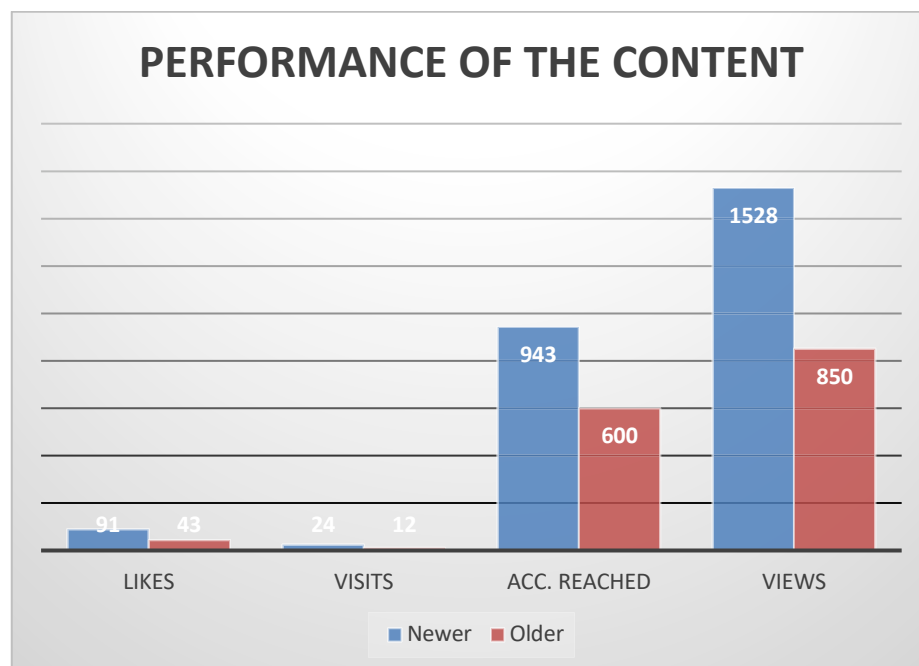


Figure 6. Graph of the performance of the content

As seen in the graph above, newer content has performed better than the older. Major difference is in accounts reached and views. Like and visits features do not have such a huge difference but still the newer posts have better scores.

For the graph, the author counted the mean value from the 10 posts that were used in the analysing part. By comparing these values in all categories, the author found out the increase or decrease in percent.

Firstly, likes category was analysed. The mean value of likes in the newer post was 111,63% higher than in the older posts. This can be explained with the fact that also amount of account reached and views of a post have increased too.

Visits category measured how many times a single user has visited the profile from a picture. In this category the increase was 100%. Due to more interesting pictures, more accounts might want to check out the whole profile to see if there is more pictures or videos that they find interesting.

Third category is accounts reached. It indicates how many accounts have seen the post. In this category the increase is 57,17%. This performance can be explained by using hashtags more efficiently and more frequent posting. Those two activities effect on Instagram's algorithm.

Lastly, differences in views category were analysed. The increase in views was 86,12%. When the content is appealing and interesting, people might

share the pictures or talk about them, which leads to the situation where more people might go and check this interesting content.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this part the author will give recommendations which are based on the knowledge found from the theoretical framework and results of the practical research. By utilising these recommendations, the case company should be able to plan a social media strategy and produce content that is more appealing and engaging for their customers.

When it comes to planning social media strategy first phase is to choose platforms where a company wants to operate. The case company already has Instagram and Facebook, where they have ready customer base. It is also time saving to post in these two because they can be linked together. That is why the author recommends using only these two.

Secondly, by utilising the data provided by Instagram for the business profiles, the case company should analyse what is their target customer group in social media. The data also shows when the customers are most active. The author recommends analysing this data to define posting times.

It is common knowledge that customers are essential to companies. They have the same role in the social media world. They are the ones who follow business profiles, so they determine one's success in these platforms. Due to this fact it is important to have customer led approach to social media marketing. From the results of the survey the case company can see what really interests their customers. Reflected from the results the author suggests focusing on outfit inspiration pictures and content of new products, since they were the most popular answers. To make the content even more interesting the case company should also post other content that the customers mentioned. This topic will be covered in detail later on in recommendations.

Another way to increase the relationships with the customers is to interact with them. The company should encourage their followers to tag them, comment on their posts and share their content. For example, the case company could post picture of two outfits and in the text ask their customers to comment which one is their favourite. Instagram Stories has also a lot of features that lets customers to interact. This way the relationship between the company and customers improves. It also has effect on Instagram's algorithm. If this kind of activity happens a lot, the algorithm will put case company's account to the "relationship status" and this way show their content even more. Commenting, sharing etc. increases the engagement levels of their content too.

In the world of social media, it is important that everyone has their style. With companies it is even more important because the content reflects their brand. In the survey, the customers answered that they like laidback style with a bit humorous style. Survey answers also showed that relatable and “everyday” style is appealing for the customers. The author recommends continuing with these styles since customers find it pleasing and because it correlates with their brand.

Lastly, the author recommends the case company to focus on content marketing when planning and producing their social media content. As mentioned earlier in this thesis it is beneficial for customers, it can increase popularity of one’s social media pages and boost brand image. The case company could produce content of DIY, ecological values, brand and product info, music and some events. These subjects came up when the author analysed the survey results. Content covering these topics, combined with outfit and product pictures can shift the image of the case company’s social media towards more positive one, without sacrificing the basic idea of it, which is to promote their products and help to increase sales. The author recommends using the content marketing mix to find out what type of content they could produce to appeal for different types of customers. For example, for the emotional based customers funny videos, reposted pictures from customers or know personalities works better, then with rational customers. For them features of products, material knowledge and regimen for jeans works better. The author recommends posting some of this content via Stories and save it to the highlights so old and new customers can visit their page to find this content.

The author recommends utilising Stories feature. There the company could produce content like introduction of model of jeans or brand information just to mention few. These stories can be saved to highlights where they stay as long as one want. This way customers can go back and re-watch for example DIY-videos. Also, it is one way to attract new customers to their page.

When the new social media plan is taken into use analysing is important. The author recommends using Instagram’s business data for this. It is important to follow how content succeeds. If there is clearly something that does not work so well it needs to be dropped off. This way the company can reduce the effort and time spent to producing some content that is clearly not as appealing to customers as the other. It is also important to analyse time management. How much time social media consumes from their everyday tasks and is the posting strategy efficient enough. The author recommends testing different times and amounts in posting and keep track of their performance to find out what suits the best and gives the results the company is looking for.

6 CONCLUSION

As the world of marketing has shifted to the digital era many companies find themselves wondering, how to execute effective marketing operations in a platform where there are millions of other enterprises just one click away. Especially, smaller businesses need to figure out how they can compete with big institutions which have tremendous marketing budgets.

This thesis was made to help case company X to develop their social media marketing plan. The goal of this thesis was to find out what kind of social media content is the most efficient when it comes to reaching and attracting customers. The study also aimed to answer to the following questions. What type of content is the most interesting for the customer?, what type of content customers would like to see? and what type of content engages the most?

With the help of multiple sources covering the topics of online marketing, social media marketing, content marketing and customer engagement, the author created a theoretical frame that was utilised to point out the biggest trends in social media marketing field.

The thesis also had a practical research where the customers of the case company X was heard out. A survey was executed in Instagram Stories, where customers could provide useful data of their social media preferences. Questions covered the topics like what social media content customers would like to see and what type of social media activity they find interesting. With the results, the author could provide truthful facts of the customers likings.

Together with the information gained from the theoretical work and the survey, the author of this thesis recommends focusing that the content gives both useful information and entertainment to the customers. With appealing content and great customer engagement the company should succeed in their goals of having better social media content.

Nowadays, it is important that marketing activities, whether in a traditional form or in social media, should favour and strengthen the brand image. Altogether, companies need to produce personalised, relatable content which gives true value and inspiration to the consumers. By staying true to themselves in the social world, they can strive in in the business environment where everything is just one click away.

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